United Nations E/CONF.98/3/Add.1

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General

15 June 2007

Original: English

Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names
New York, 21 - 30 August 2007
Item 10 of the provisional agenda*
Exonyms

Donor-recommended exonyms – or a method of not treading on your neighbour's toes

Submitted by Israel**

* E/CONF.98/1

** Prepared by Naftali Kadmon, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel.

07-40029

Donor-recommended exonyms – or a method of not treading on your neighbour's toes

Naftali Kadmon (Israel)

At the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in New York, Aug.-Sept. 1992, Israel presented a paper titled "Donor-recommended exonyms: a different approach to traditional names"[1]. The topic was further developed during the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names which was held in New York, January 1998. On that occasion the undersigned presented a paper named "Donor-recommended exonyms for historical topographic features in Israel"[2]. At that time there was as yet no UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms. Since this working group was set up in 2002, the subject is now being presented in a somewhat modified form.

At the 23rd session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names in Vienna, 2006, the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology accepted a new and wider definition of the term exonym , which had been proposed by the Working Group on Exonyms. Whereas the original definition confirmed by the Seventh Conference had stated that an exonym is defined as a "name used in a specific language for a geographical feature situated outside the area where that language has official status, etc."[3], the new definition replaced the words "official language" by the phrase "where that language is spoken, and differing in its form from the name used in an official or well established language." There are cases where this definition may tread on somebody's toes, namely where toponyms resulting from a former occupation, viewed by the present-day authorities of the respective country as exonyms even if there is an (undefined) minority speaking the language of these exonyms, whereas the country which in the past ruled over these region regards them as endonyms – a view to which the present-day administration might object. One way out of this historically or politically based predicament is the proposed method of donor-recommended exonyms. Of course it relies on the goodwill of the two (or more) sides and their willingness to sit down and discuss the matter, as, for example, did Denmark, Norway and Sweden concerning the Skagerrak.

In the second paper mentioned above and in footnote 2, it was proposed that a specific country – to be termed in the present context the donor country – can request, or at least recommend, that all but a limited number of toponyms in its own territory be always referred to by their endonyms when applied by the international community, i.e. by receiver countries. The resulting residue of a limited (smaller or greater) number of geographical names would then form the basis for a list of donor-recommended exonyms.

---

[1] See document E/CONF.85/L.7, Report of the [Sixth] Conference, vol. II, Technical Papers, p. 365.
[2] See document E/CONF.91/L.10, Report of the [Seventh] Conference, vol. II, Technical Papers, p. 264.
[3] *Glossary of terms for the standardization of geographical names*, United Nations, New York, 2002.

This principle is being followed in Israel, where a great number of biblical place names exist, chiefly in their Hebrew endonymic form. Many of these names have traditional exonymic forms in the languages and the literature of the respective receiver countries, and particularly in the Bible.The application of the donor principle has two aspects, one external and one internal. The first, external aspect is the one mentioned above, namely agreeing to the use of specified list of donor-recommended exonyms by foreign toponymic, cartographic, touristic and other institutions in their publications, though preferably together with their respective endonyms, e.g. in parentheses or in a different font. Naturally, the exonyms will have different forms in different languages. Perhaps the best example is Jerusalem. The official Hebrew endonym for Jerusalem is the biblical form ירושלים, romanized as Yerushalayim by the official romanization system. Different linguistic communities use different exonyms, mostly originating in different translations of the Bible: Jerusalem (English, German), Jérusalem (French), Jerusalen (Spanish), Gerusalemme (Italian), Jeruzalem (Dutch, Afrikaans), اورشليم (Urshalīm, Arabic and Persian), Hiruharama (Maori), Ιερουσαλήμ (Greek) and others. All these forms can be employed in their respective languages. The same is, of course true of other topographic features.

The second aspect is of an internal or national character. Romanized maps printed by Israeli cartographic institutions including the Survey of Israel, national surveying and mapping authority, which in the past printed exonyms of only seven topographic features in its Romanized topographic maps, will now be carrying the recommended exonyms too – mainly in their English or Latin conventional form. In official maps they are being printed after their respective endonyms. Roman-script road signs, however, which for reasons of legibility by car drivers are limited in the amount of text they can carry, will provide only the English exonyms, without the romanized endonyms. This refers to the white, green and blue road signboards maintained by the National Roads Authority, and the orange-brown ones designed by the Government Tourist Authority. The method is intended to simplify map use and road navigation by non-Hebrew reading persons, and in particular foreign tourists visiting Israel.

The revised list of donor-recommended exonyms in Israel is shown below (see Table 1).

Table 1: List of donor-recommended exonyms in Israel

English exonym	Hebrew endonym, romanized*	Hebrew endonym
Antipatris	Antipatrus	אנטיפטרוס
Banias	Panyas	פניאס
Bethsaida	Bet-Tsayda	בית-צידא
Caesarea**	Horbat Kesari	חרבת קיסרי
Cana	Kfar Kana	כפר-כנא
Capernaum	Kfar-Nahum	כפר-נחום
Chorazim	Korazim	כורזים

Dead Sea	Yam HaMelah	ים המלח
Eilat	Elat	אילת
Haifa	Hefa	חיפה
Jaffa***	Yafo	יפו
Jerusalem	Yerushalayim	ירושלים
Jordan River	Nehar HaYarden	נהר הירדן
Judean Desert	Midbar Yehuda	מדבר יהודה
Lachish	Lakhish	לכיש
Magdala**	Migdal	מגדל
Masada	Metsada	מצדה
Mount of Beatitudes	Har HaOsher	הר האושר
Mount Carmel	Har Karmel	הר כרמל
Mount Moriah	Har HaMoriyya	הר המוריה
Mount of Olives	Har HaZetim	הר הזיתים
Mount Scopus	Har HaTsofim	הר הצופים
Mount Tabor	Har Tavor	הר תבור
Mount Zion	Har Tsiyyon	הר ציון
Nazareth	Natsrat	נצרת
Safed	Tsefat	צפת
Samaria	Shomron	שומרון
Sea of Galilee	Yam Kinneret	ים כנרת
Sodom	Sdom	סדום
Tabigha	En Sheva	עין שבע
Tiberias	Tverya	טבריה

---

* Romanized according to the new system (2006).

** Antiquity site only, not the new town.

*** The old city, but Tel-Aviv–Yafo.

All other toponyms in Israel should be printed in foreign maps in their endonymic form – transliterated or transcribed, as the case my be, but not exonymized. Thus, Ashdod and not Asdod, Ashkelon and not Ascalon, Netanya and not Nathania, Nahariyya and not Nahariah.

The same principle could be of help and advantage in other countries, especially those that have a background in biblical literature such as Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Greece. The State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan have several biblical toponyms in common, such as the River Jordan and the Dead Sea. Whereas the endonyms of the former are HaYarden in Hebrew and al Urdun in Arabic, and of the latter, Yam HaMelah and al Bahr al Mayyit, respectively, both countries use the same English exonyms (River) Jordan and Dead Sea.

The donor principle does not clash with the United Nations' admonition to reduce the number of exonyms, and can even help in stabilizing it, and can prevent turning more endonyms into

exonyms. And it can assist in establishing (or modifying) a receiver country's list of exonyms if it takes into account lists of donor-recommended exonyms. The name of the game would, however, preferably be the principle of the "toe-trodden" and the "heavy-footed", or the "annoyer" and annoyed (if there be such) , to sit down together and discuss the matter until white smoke emerges from their common chimney!

Summary

This paper elaborates on two previous papers, namely "Donor-recommended exonyms: a different approach to traditional names" (1992) and "Donor-recommended exonyms for historical topographic features in Israel" (1998). At that time there was as yet no UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms. Since this working group was set up in 2002, the subject is now being presented in a somewhat modified form. In 2006 the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology accepted a new and wider definition of the term exonym , which had been proposed by the Working Group on Exonyms. There are cases (elaborated in the paper) where this definition may, figuratively speaking, tread on some countries' toes, as was mentioned at UNGEGN-23. One way out of this historically or politically based predicament is the proposed method of donor-recommended exonyms, described in the paper. It is being followed in Israel, where a great number of biblical place names exist, chiefly in their Hebrew endonymic form. Many of these names have traditional exonymic forms in the languages and the literature of the respective receiver countries, and particularly in the Bible. The method is intended to simplify map use and road navigation by non-Hebrew reading persons, and in particular foreign tourists visiting Israel. A revised list of donor-recommended exonyms in Israel is appended. All other toponyms should be printed in foreign maps in their endonymic form. The same principle could be of advantage in other countries, and in particular those that have a background in biblical literature such as Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Greece, or regions which have a residue of names of former occupations. It does not clash with the United Nations' admonition to reduce the number of exonyms, and can even prevent turning more endonyms into exonyms.